

Highveld Region builds women's structures

COSATU's Highveld region has elected an 11 person committee to co-ordinate women's issues in the region. 5 locals are represented on the regional co-ordinating committee which will meet once a month.

The committee was elected at a regional women's meeting held in May in Standerton. More than 100 women attended from Secunda, Bethal, Witbank, Nelspruit, Piet Retief.

The regional treasurer called on women to resist "the back seat in the liberation wagon." He talked of how 20 000 women resisted the pass laws in 1956. He said women should build on this history by taking first place in the Living Wage campaign.

The seminar recommended that:

- women must attend union and COSATU structures and make sure women's issues are on the agenda.
- administrators should be involved in all structures and help to build women's organisation.
- the structures mobilise around health and safety e.g. cervical cancer and maternity leave.
- women's structures be built in all locals and affiliates.
- regular regional women's meetings should be held to assess progress.

The meeting also discussed the tasks of the co-ordinating committee. It must:

- meet every month.
- strategise and decide on women's representation.
- advise regional O/Bs on women's issues.
- facilitate the development of women's struggle at regional and local level.

Viva Highveld Women Workers!

Women Organise!

Women must be organised. Some men object to women organising themselves. They say it means that we are discriminating for women. But why do women need to organise themselves as women?

The main problem is men. Our men are very backward. We even treat women as commodities. Through the lobola system we put a price on them. We say: "I paid so much for her". We undress women and parade them. Then we choose one of them and say: 'You are queen.' Why don't we parade men naked and then pick one and say: 'You are king.'

We must realise that we are all beautiful in different ways. After liberation we will honour people for their contribution to the struggle. We will say: "She or he is beautiful because the deeds they have done are beautiful."

You also find that the man and the women both arrive home from work. The man relaxes while the wife cooks the food. And then the man has many complaints and grumbles about the food. On top of that we don't want our women to attend meetings. We get angry and say "Where have you been, why are you so late?" We get annoyed when others oppress us, yet we oppress our women.

Cde Harry Gwala speaking to workers in Johannesburg



Women and the Living Wage Campaign

Women and the Living Wage Campaign

There is a new COSATU booklet on women - "COSATU and the Living Wage Campaign". The book talks about many problems faced by women in the workplace, the community and in our organisations. These are linked to COSATU's Living Wage demands. There is lots of useful information.

The booklet will be good to use in education: after each chapter there are some questions to encourage further discussion. The booklet was written by a group of women in COSATU. You can buy it for R3 at regional offices and the Head Office of COSATU.

COSATU women organise!